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FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3948
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0365
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 9931
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001844

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STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018
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CM, SO, SU, NI
SUBJECT: DRL A/S KRAMER MEETS NIGERIAN FONMIN MADUEKWE

Classified By: CDA Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) David Kramer and DAS Jeffrey Krilla met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe to discuss Nigerian involvement in peacekeeping, Sudan, the UN Human Rights Council, the Niger Delta and coordinating positions on resolutions before the UNGA Third Committee (septel). Maduekwe restated GON commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, peacekeeping operations (particularly Nigeria's upcoming deployment to Somalia), and promoting development in the Niger Delta while dealing with criminal elements in a manner consistent with the rule of law and respect for human rights. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) A/S Kramer began by congratulating the GON on living up to its obligations to implement the International Court of Justice decision recognizing Cameroonian sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula. He characterized the handover as difficult but "handled extremely well." A/S Kramer expressed concern over President Yar'Adua's health and extended his and Secretary Rice's best wishes to the President. He also thanked Nigeria for its past and continued support of peacekeeping operations, particularly of the UN/AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as its planned deployment to Somalia under the auspices of the African Union (AMISOM).

AU and UN Peacekeeping Missions =====

¶3. (C) Foreign Minister Maduekwe stated that Nigerian peacekeepers "should deploy by next month" to bolster AMISOM's severely undermanned forces. (Comment: Deployment within 30 to 60 days has been predicted for quite some time. DAO currently estimates that Nigerian troops will be unable to deploy until at least December, as the GON has yet to provide an appropriate list of specific equipment required, despite multiple requests since mid-2007. The USG has provided \$3 million for the procurement of said equipment which must then be shipped to Somalia. End comment.) Maduekwe related that he had recently met with Nigerian General Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor, the new UN Military Adviser to Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, to discuss peacekeeping operations. According to Maduekwe, both agreed that U.S. support was critical to the Somalia mission as it was "not a typical peacekeeping operation," but one which required "enforcement and technical capacity." "I don't want our

troops to be sitting ducks," Maduekwe commented to A/S Kramer, alluding to the September 2007 attacks on Nigerian troops in Sudan which resulted in the loss of ten soldiers. He expressed frustration about UNAMID and criticized the Government of Sudan whose procedural arguments with the UN and "excuses don't seem to be impressing anybody." Though he expressed hope that the quest for justice would not undermine the peace process, he flatly stated that "sovereignty is no reason to close our eyes in Darfur." In his view, UNAMID is under-equipped and in particular need of helicopters, given the janjaweed's ability to move freely and what he characterized as their apparent support from GOS gunships. "There is no peace to keep in Sudan," Maduekwe opined, and speculated that it may become difficult to sustain public support for the continued deployment of Nigerian troops there. In response, A/S Kramer undertook to explore the possibility of getting Ukrainian helicopters for air support, assets which he said had been helpful in the past.

UN Human Rights Council

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14. (C) Maduekwe expressed disappointment with the USG's decision to disengage from the Human Rights Council (HRC), suggesting that the U.S. had "left at the wrong time." He maintained that Nigeria would use its chairmanship of the Council to make it more effective, but thought this work would be advanced if the U.S. were playing an active role in the HRC. In reference to USG objections to having human rights offenders on the Council, he asked, "If sinners come to church, what's wrong with that?" to which Kramer replied "Nothing... as long as they're repenting." A/S Kramer also

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stressed the importance of the upcoming UN General Assembly Third Committee session in light of the deterioration of the Human Rights Council (septel). Maduekwe related his experience at the last African Union (AU) ministerial meeting where he said he had rejected the routine condemnations of Israel and expressed to his counterparts the need to move beyond them, and to encourage both Israeli and Palestinian moderates. Otherwise, he predicted, the AU will lose its influence, and position as an honest broker, with the parties involved. He also suggested that Africa had other under-utilized avenues of influence available to it, especially economic ones, though he did not elaborate.

Niger Delta

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15. (C) FonMin Maduekwe was critical of the pre-1999 military government's mishandling of the Niger Delta issue, while noting the need for a national political consensus on the Delta. "Neglect of the Niger Delta was not only unconscionable, but stupid, as it undermined our own national interest. It is the source of 90 percent of government revenue," he said. While critical of the Niger Delta Development Commission for its corruption, Maduekwe maintained that "things have moved since '99". He noted that the GON was trying to learn from past mistakes, and maintained that resolution of the Delta issue was the most important aspect of President Yar'Adua's Seven Point Agenda. He insisted that the GON did not underestimate the complexity of the problem; he lamented the fact that, in his view, criminals who benefited from the status quo -- and so wanted neither a peaceful resolution nor development in the Delta -- had hijacked the process.

16. (C) Maduekwe noted that the purpose of government was to confront and address problems. He said the GON was trying to proceed on the dual tracks of both restoring law and order in the Delta and of injecting massive investment to undermine the political justification for continued unrest. He insisted that the GON was committed to implementing the Niger Delta Master Plan and felt a summit would be helpful in promoting buy-in and a sense of ownership amongst the riverine communities.

¶7. (C) The FonMin reiterated that the GON would not turn a blind eye to criminal activity, but stressed that force would only be used if absolutely necessary. "Our capacity to deal with the Niger Delta is directly linked to human rights" he said. Maduekwe acknowledged that the GON was not always happy or even comfortable with the behavior of some of its military forces in the Delta, but argued that the same held true whenever military forces were deployed among civilians. He observed that such situations were especially challenging for the GON because of the media savvy of the militant groups, who were quick to charge the Government with "genocide." Maduekwe underscored the fact that the GON had progressed on the investment track three weeks ago when it approved a three billion naira (\$25.5 million) contract to build bridges in the Delta, the start of what he characterized as a "Marshall Plan" for the region.

PFLAUMER